

**Kalamazoo Public Library
OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING**

DATE: November 3, 2003

TIME: 4:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Van Deusen Room/Central Library
315 South Rose Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

President Brown called the meeting to order at 4:00 a.m.

Roll Call: All trustees were present: Cynthia Addison, Donald Brown, Robert Brown, Amy DeShon, Loren Dykstra, Lisa Godfrey, and James Vander Roest.

It was not necessary to conduct any regular library business.

MOTION: MR. VANDER ROEST MOVED AND MS. ADDISON SUPPORTED MOVING TO A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM MR. WILLIAM SCHROER REGARDING A RECENT ATTITUDES, AWARENESS AND USAGE SURVEY COMPLETED BY HIS FIRM FOR KALAMAZOO PUBLIC LIBRARY.



Motion carried 7-0. The meeting moved to a committee of the whole at 4:01 p.m.

Presentation: Mr. Amdursky introduced Mr. William Schroer of WJ Schroer Company to the board. Mr. Schroer indicated the agenda for his presentation of the recently completed attitude, awareness and usage study for KPL would consist of the following.

- Overall report, utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, questions from trustees
- Address benefits/issues uncovered by the survey
- Suggestions for follow-up

Mr. Schroer presented background information on demographics, how the survey was administered, specific questions asked and responses, answered a number of questions and addressed comments from trustees.

Overall, he indicated the survey demonstrates a high level of awareness, usage and support for KPL. There are clear opportunities for new products/services and adjustments of library activities to better serve the user base. More communications/promotion and better dissemination of KPL activities and services are indicated to stimulate more in-depth use of KPL products as well as to stimulate trial with non-users.

Based on the survey results, specific recommendations from Mr. Schroer were:

-Extend the reach and influence of the Library through new initiatives, boundary stretching and becoming more relevant as a significant force for social change within the Kalamazoo community.

-Marketing emphasis on the basics including demonstrations of the currency and relevancy of the Library collections, especially as it relates to everyday decision-making, may be needed to change the user perception that messages regarding basic services and capabilities are not being sent.

-Decisions made regarding technology investment and the amount of space and hardware devoted to Internet access should consider the potential reduced demand in coming years as computer household penetration continues to advance upward.

-Although buying vs. borrowing are different and the collections are different, libraries must recognize the overlap of these target audiences and the importance of responding to profile customer needs. This may include adjustment of hours, products/services and the ability to flexibly respond to opportunities relating to this profile user group.

-KPL may wish to experiment with the sales of books, especially best sellers or “hot topic” books, to determine acceptability and demand. If successful, such sales may serve to defray costs of non-revenue generating programs and satisfy user demands.

-Marketing/communication messages may need to address the value derived from a Library visit...making it worth the time for the visit. Subordinately, a secondary message of “when you can’t visit the Library, visit our website” may develop demand and usage of the Library website and its databases.

-Trial offers to non-users may extend an offer of “No fines for 90 days” or other direct responses to the concern regarding pressure to return books and the use of fines as a disincentive for late returns. As with other offers to non-customers there is little cost or downside if the customer does not take advantage of the offer.

-The preponderance of users who identify “KPL” as the library they visit (downtown), raises questions regarding branch usage. Additional research may be necessary to quantify branch usage, determine why branches are/are not used and consider programs, collections adjustments, hours changes, etc. to stimulate use of the branches.

-Messages, signage and other marketing/communications efforts may be devoted to stimulating trial of other products than books for users. The purpose would be greater value received per visit, enhanced by brand loyalty and increased frequency of visits.

-As users find more information on the Internet and avoid Library visits, additional reasons for visiting the Library may be identified and promoted such as those noted above along with additional information on Library products and services for which many users are unaware.

-In spite of the intractable nature of the problem, parking stands out as the one significant obstacle to a superior experience for users. Additional solutions to the problem of finding accessible parking should be pursued as part of the Library’s efforts to insure a quality Library experience when users visit.

-Additional efforts may be made to better understand what adjustments or policy changes would encourage more users to feel the Library is a good place to read and relax.

-KPL should initiate an “open later, stay open later” policy on a trial basis but insure preparatory and support communications are provided to minimize inconvenience and disruption to those used to accessing the Library early in the day.

-Respondents are not fully supportive of a move to open on Sunday night at the expense of a weeknight; this proposal should be tabled for now with the option to review this potential opportunity in the future.

-Early childhood literacy appears to be popular as a goal and is seen to fit with the mission of the Library. If a program of this type is contemplated, it would be the program of choice for KPL.

-Job skills development was strongly supported over other options. If job skills development is not part of the Library's mission, KPL may find a partner to work with and provide support through the use of the website, a specific part of the collection devoted to this area of training, or other support.

-While an endorsement for KPL taking over public school libraries is at least somewhat desirable, a more detailed plan and appropriate political and public communications preparation are necessary prior to submitting this concept to the public for a definitive vote. While a good start, a 2/3 positive indicator is often seen as a minimal threshold for success.

Disposition: The board received the report.

MOTION:



MS. GODFREY MOVED AND MR. VANDER ROEST SUPPORTED A RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION AT 5:45 P.M.

Motion carried 7-0. The meeting returned to regular session at 5:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, President Brown adjourned the meeting of the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees at 5:46 p.m.

Loren Dykstra, Secretary